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THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN

Ἐλπίρ το Ὀθία ἀν ῥνα ἡάρουῖς, ἀγυρ ῥιόδῶάν ἀν ἂν ὁταλῖν ὁαῖτοῖς το να ὁάοιμῖς.

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ANCIENT IRISH SAINTS AND MODERN ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS ON THE FREE USE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

OUR readers will remember that, in a former number, we gave extracts from the writings of some of the early popes and bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, showing the great importance which they attached to the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, both among the clergy and their flocks, and how urgently they exhorted the laity to read and study them. We now proceed to give some information regarding the opinions and practice of the ancient Church of Ireland on this important subject; and we shall then bring forward one or two declarations of the modern Roman Catholic bishops, in Ireland, respecting the study of the Word of God, for the purpose of ascertaining how far they agree, and how far they differ, from the sentiments of the ancient bishops of the Irish Church.

We have good reason for affirming that, so early as the fourth and fifth centuries, the study of the Holy Scriptures was generally diffused throughout the British Isles. It may be sufficient at present to quote the well-known testimony of St. Chrysostom—"Although," saith he, "thou didst go unto the ocean and those British Isles, although thou didst sail to the Euxine Sea, although thou didst go unto the southern quarters, thou shouldst hear ALL men everywhere discoursing matters out of the SCRIPTURE, with another voice, indeed, but not another faith, and with a different tongue, but with an according judgment."* It is, doubtless, a subject of deep regret to every person who takes an interest in the ancient history of our Irish Church, that we do not possess as much information as we could desire, respecting its state and condition during the period which immediately succeeded the first introduction of Christianity. Time, which makes such melancholy ravages in all things earthly, has laid his destructive hand with especial weight upon the literary records of our own and other countries, during those early ages. We can infer, however, even from the documents which have come down to us, and which are doubly valuable from their scarcity, that the ancient Catholic Church of Ireland was adorned by many excellent and pious men, whose learn-

ing was conspicuous amidst the darkness by which they were surrounded. Our country, as has been often remarked, bore a very high character for learning in ancient times. Strangers crowded from other lands to be educated in Ireland, looking upon it as one of the principal nurseries of religion and learning in Europe.

But the study which they prized most highly, and cultivated most carefully, was that of the Word of God; and proofs of this fact are continually afforded to us, in the lives and histories of almost all the eminent saints and pious men who adorned our ancient Church.

To begin with St. Patrick himself, to whose missionary zeal we owe the foundation of our Church. An examination of his writings will show how well acquainted he was with the text of Holy Scripture, and how fond he was of quoting it. His mind seems to have been filled with the knowledge of the Word of God, inasmuch that, when he began to instruct others, the texts and language of the Bible poured forth from his lips in a copious and abundant stream.

No one can read any of the writings of St. Patrick, without perceiving that he felt he had found a sacred treasure in the Holy Volume,* and that he took the Word of God for the rule of his life and conduct; that he not only studied it carefully himself, and impressed its precepts deeply on his memory, but was also anxious that others, whether men or women, should follow his example; that they to whom he preached should become familiar with the Holy Scriptures, and be able to use them profitably for their own guidance and instruction in life.

Our next authority shall be St. Columbanus (of whom we gave a brief and hasty sketch in our first number). We are told of this eminent man that, in his early youth, he placed himself under the care of a "venerable person, of high reputation among his countrymen, for piety and learning, who carefully instructed him in the whole of the Divine Scriptures."† And the reverence with which St. Columbanus, in after years, mentions the Holy Scriptures, as the great foundation of his faith and practice, is evident from many passages of his writings, as, for instance, in the following one from his sermon on the Mortification of Sin—"Excepting these statements," saith he, "which either the Law, or the Prophets, or the Gospel, or the Apostles, have made to us, solemn silence ought to be observed, as far as other authorities are concerned, with respect to the Trinity. For it is God's testimony alone that is to be credited concerning God—that is, concerning himself. And this testimony concerning himself he has given,

either in the Law, or in a Prophet, or in the Gospel, or in an Apostle, or, in special cases, to individuals, either by himself or by an angel."* It is very clear, that the writer of this passage looked to Scripture, and to Scripture alone, for the rule of his faith, and that he deemed it needless, as well as irreverent, to refer to any other authority. And not only did St. Columbanus thus value the Word of God himself, but he earnestly recommended it to *all* Christians, that they should esteem the Scriptures as their chief riches, as we learn from the following verse of his writings—

"Sint tibi divitiæ Divinæ dogmata legis:"‡

in which he repeats, under another form, the sentiments of the Royal Psalmist—"The law of thy mouth is good to me, above thousands of gold and silver."—Ps. cxviii. 72, Douay version.

It is equally certain that the Scriptures were carefully studied by the most eminent Irish saints, who came after those just noticed. We are told that the disciples of St. Columba, another most eminent Irish saint, used to support their opinions "by referring to the testimony of Holy Scripture."—Adamnam's Vit. St. Columb., p. 143, quoted in King's Ch. Hist., i. 320. It is recorded of St. Aidan (who died, A.D. 651), by the venerable Bede, that "he endeavoured not to omit any of those duties that he had learned in the writings of the Evangelist, or Apostles, or Prophets, but to fulfil them all to the best of his ability;" and it is added, that "all who went to him, whether those who had undergone the tonsure (*i.e.*, the clergy), or the laity, were bound to employ themselves in reading the Scriptures, or learning the Psalms."—Bede. iii. 5, quoted in King's Ir. Ch. Hist., i. pp. 205, 320. Dr. Lanigan, the Roman Catholic Church historian of Ireland, informs us that "St. Petrocus, a native of Britain, spent twenty years in Ireland, applying himself to the study of the Scriptures, and to the acquirement of general knowledge."—Vol. i., p. 492. Of St. Finnian, of Clonard, in Meath, he tells us that "he was distinguished for his extraordinary learning and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures."—Vol. ii., p. 21. He mentions, likewise, a curious anecdote in the life of St. Senanus (who died, according to Archbishop Ussher, A.D. 544), while the saint was at Inniscarra (a place five miles west of Cork, where he built a church), "a vessel arrived in Cork harbour, bringing fifty religious persons—passengers from the Continent—whom the love of a stricter mode of life, or a desire to improve themselves in the study of the Scriptures, had attracted to Ireland;" and Colgan, the old author from whom Dr. Lanigan quotes this story, adds the remarkable words, that "*the study of the Scriptures, at that time, greatly flourished in Ireland.*"†

Perhaps, however, it may be replied, that the study of the Word of God, spoken of in these extracts, was confined to the monks and clergy,

* King's Church History, vol. i. p. 299.

† Columb. in Monast. et in Epistola ad Hunaldum. Ussher, at supra, 244.

‡ Quos Scripturarum peritise, tunc in eâ multum florentis, desiderium in Hiberniam traxerat." Lanigan, ii., pp. 2—5. King i. 323.

* Chrys. Op., Tom. iii., p. 86; Paris, 1837. See also Abp. Ussher, Religion of the Ancient Irish, Works, vol. iv., p. 243.

* In a Latin hymn, written by his nephew, Secundinus, or St. Seachin, St. Patrick is described as having found "a sacred treasure in the Sacred Volume."—Colgan, Tr. Th., p. 212. And in describing the virtuous and chaste woman, St. Patrick himself, in his treatise concerning the abuses of the world, says—"She quickens her soul by assiduous meditations and discourses on the Scriptures."—Sanct. Patr. Abusionibus Sæculi, ch. v., p. 264. Villaneuvus edition, 1835. "Bonis semper moribus, delectatur et consentit, et assidue Scripturarum meditationibus et eloquiis animam vegetat."

† Jonas Vit. St. Columb., cap. 2, quoted in King's Church History of Ireland, vol. i., p. 251.

who may be supposed to have been familiar with the Latin Vulgate; but that it would be an erroneous inference to conclude that the knowledge of the Scriptures was diffused among all classes, young and old, in their own mother tongue. If this objection could be sustained, the argument which we have endeavoured to derive from the practice of our countrymen in ancient times would, doubtless, lose much of its weight. But we are enabled to prove, by the testimony of the venerable Bede, that the objection is altogether groundless. "The Island of Britain," saith he, "in the language of five nations, doth teach and confess one and the same knowledge of the highest truth, and of the true sublimity—to wit, of the English, the Britons, the Scots (*i.e.*, the Irish, who were anciently always called Scots), the Picts, and the Latins."* In this passage there is a plain acknowledgement, that such as understood not the Latin might yet, in their own mother tongue, search those "Holy Scriptures, which were able to make them wise unto salvation." Bede, indeed, speaks only of Britain, but it is obvious, from the mention of the Scots, as well as from the constant intercourse which existed between the two countries in his time, that his remarks apply equally to Ireland. Nor was the study of the Word of God confined to persons of mature years; the young were diligently trained, even from their childhood, to read and learn the oracles of God. It was thus, as we have seen, that St. Columbanus was instructed, inasmuch that, "while yet a very young man, he wrote an exposition of the Psalms, in elegant language, so thoroughly were the treasures of the Divine Scriptures kept stored in his bosom."† And hence we can readily understand, that our Irish ancestors may have well deserved the character given of them by Aldhelm, the old Abbot of Malmesbury, in a letter written about A.D. 690, that they were "ingenious book leaders, and ready-witted arguers out of the Scriptures:" and that, so late as the eleventh century, they were described by John, the son of Bishop Sulgen, as "a nation famous for the Word of God."‡

These examples might be easily extended to a considerable length, by the aid of the authorities from whom we have borrowed; we think, however, that we have done enough to satisfy our readers, that in ancient times the Word of God was prized and valued throughout the length and breadth of Ireland. There is, indeed, no circumstance in our ancient history upon which a true Irishman can dwell with more interest and pleasure, than the singular reputation for letters and advancement in Christian knowledge, by which Ireland was in those days distinguished. Not only did the light of religion and learning then shine so brightly in our land, as to attract to our shores many strangers from distant countries, but its influence even penetrated to the most remote parts of Europe. The labours of the Irish clergy were not confined to their own country; their missionaries crossed the seas to Scotland, to Britain, and to the Continent. They converted heathens; they established schools of learning; they diffused a love of letters among the Saxons and Normans. Burgundy, Germany, and other countries received their instructions; and Europe, with gratitude, confessed the superior knowledge, the piety, the zeal of the "Island of Saints."

But these happy days passed by, and darker times, alas! succeeded. Our Church surrendered the independence which she had long retained; and the authority of the Pope was formally acknowledged by the bishops and clergy of Ireland,

in the Synod of Cashel, A.D. 1172. Thenceforward we hear but little of the spread of learning, or the diffusion of religious knowledge. A dark and dreary interval succeeds; until at length, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, Europe was startled from its slumbers by the progress of the Reformation. The Church of Rome took the alarm. She seems to have thought (whether rightly or wrongly, it is not now our purpose to inquire) that the reading of the Bible, in the vulgar tongue, had a tendency to draw men's minds away from herself, and towards the Reformed Churches; and, accordingly, we find that, from that time forward, various hindrances and obstacles to the free circulation of the Scriptures were interposed by her authority, or with her consent. Among numberless proofs of the fact, we need only refer to the history of the famous Bull, "Unigenitus." Father Quesnel published a book, in which, amongst other propositions, he ventured to assert, that "the reading of the Sacred Scripture is for all," and that "to interdict from Christians the reading of the Sacred Scripture, particularly of the Gospel, is to interdict the use of light from the sons of light." Any unprejudiced Christian would be apt to imagine that these were sound and wholesome opinions: but Clement XI., who was then Pope, thought otherwise. He seems to have been afraid that, if the Scriptures were generally used, Christianity would be overthrown: and, to prevent such a misfortune, he published a Bull, dated September 8, 1713, in which he declared these propositions, as well as others, to be a "false, captious, and ill-sounding, scandalous, pernicious, injurious to the Church, seditious, impious, blasphemous, heretical," &c., and, consequently, "forbids any of the faithful to teach or maintain, or even to mention them, either in public or private, with any other view than to confute them," &c., which if anybody dares to attempt, he is assured he will draw upon himself the "indignation of God Almighty, and the Blessed Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul."

Now, we must remember that this Bull is no ordinary document. It is at this present moment actually in force, in the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland: for when the late Archbishop Murray was asked by the Committee of the House of Commons, in 1825 (*vide* Report, p. 647), "Is the Bull Unigenitus received in Ireland?" his reply was, "It is." Hence it follows, that by the authority of this Bull, the Church of Rome clearly and positively *condemns* the free, unrestricted reading of the Holy Scriptures. And, accordingly, we find that Dr. Troy, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, did not hesitate to avow that such was the doctrine of his Church. In a letter which he wrote, dated 23rd July, 1818, and which is published in the Report of the Irish Education Commissioners (p. 46), he thus expresses his views—"Allow me, very reverend sir, on this occasion, to observe, that the Catholic Church in all ages has *prohibited* the indiscriminate use of the Scriptures, in the vulgar tongues, without note or comment: also the interpretation of them by every one's private judgment. This interpretation has been the fatal and prolific hive, from which swarms of sectaries daily issue; each one finding his religion in the Bible, which has disfigured and distracted the Christian Church since the days of Luther. Wherefore, the Catholic Church *condemns* the indiscriminate use of the Scriptures in vulgar tongues, without note or comment, and permits it only to the learned, or to the lettered of the laity."

What Dr. Troy here means by the "*indiscriminate*" use, he does not define, any more than the *degree* of learning or letters which qualifies a layman for permission from the Church of Rome to read the Holy Scriptures. The majority of mankind unfortunately require but a tri-

fling obstacle to deter them from studying the Sacred Volume, and *incentives* are more needful than *restrictions* with reference to it. At any rate, where God has placed no restrictions, we think man has no right to impose limits or hindrances. The Scriptures were obviously written that they might be read, and if the Gospel was preached to the poor, and the poor have souls to be saved, we think it self-evident that the Gospel should be as much open to them, if able to read it, as to the most learned layman in the community.

It is possible that the strong terms used in Dr. Troy's letter, *prohibiting* and *condemning* the free use of the Scriptures, may have excited dissatisfaction in the public mind at that time, when Roman Catholics were seeking for political emancipation, and their bishops were anxious to gain a character for liberal and enlightened views. In a document, published some few years after, and which was signed by all the Roman Catholic prelates of Ireland, we consequently find somewhat milder language employed. The second clause of the declaration to which we allude, and which was dated Jan. 5, 1826, runs as follows:—"The Catholics of Ireland, of mature years, are *permitted* to read authentic and approved translations of the Holy Scriptures, with explanatory notes; and are exhorted to use them in the spirit of piety, humility and obedience." As this declaration has never been revoked or modified by the same authority by which it was issued, we suppose it may be fairly taken to point out the amount of liberty which the rulers of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland are willing to allow to the laity, as regards the reading of the Word of God.

With respect to the use of the explanatory notes, alluded to in the passage just quoted, it is, of course, not our intention to disparage them in general, or to deter any class of our countrymen from carefully studying learned and pious commentaries on the Word of God, as well as the Divine original. Every man is bound, we think, to avail himself of every means within his reach, whether by written or oral instruction, to arrive at the real meaning of the Sacred Volume. For this the clergy were instituted, to assist and guide the laity by their superior learning and piety. The priest, however, is not to be placed above the Bible; and where he affects to teach anything for which he is unable to show clear Scripture warrant the laity have a right to question him closely as to the grounds of his teaching; and to require, not the mere assertion of any man, or body of men, but clear and satisfactory evidence, "confirmation strong as proof of Holy Writ;" and if they value their own safety, it is but common sense and common prudence for them to do so.

We have now set before our readers the opinions of our ancient saints, and of the modern Roman Catholic bishops, on the use and circulation of the Scriptures; and they can judge for themselves which class of sentiments appear to be most reasonable, and most in accordance with God's revealed will. St. Patrick and St. Columbanus considered the Scriptures to be a sacred treasure, of which all should be invited freely to partake. Their only anxiety seemed to be, that the people should come to the fountain of the water of life, and drink, without stint or hindrance, of its refreshing streams; the Church of Rome, on the other hand, seems, by her language, to look on Scripture with a jealous and unfriendly eye. She speaks of permissions, and prohibitions, and condemnations: the learned and the lettered of the laity may be suffered to draw near, and gaze upon the oracles of God, but the unlearned or the poor are sternly repelled, and we fear, in actual practice, too often denounced as disobedient and heretical, whatever may be their natural powers of mind, or anxiety to improve themselves in religious truth. St. Paul commended Timothy

* Bede i., cap. i. Ussher, Religion of the Ancient Irish, iv., p. 243.

† "Intra adolescentiæ ætatem detentus," are the words of his biographer, Jonas.—King's, Ch. His., i., p. 252.

‡ "Sed cum jam cimba voluisset adire revertsus
Famosam gentem Scripturis atque magistris."
—Lanigan, iii., p. 492.

that "from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures:" but it seems the Roman Catholics of Ireland are forbidden, by the united voice of the bishops of their Church, to read the Word of God, until they arrive at "mature years." In the education of youth, at least, the Holy Scriptures are to be a prohibited book, with some honourable exceptions, such as that mentioned in a former number of our journal, to the honour of Dr. Browne, Roman Catholic Bishop of Kilmore, Ireland, as we have seen, was looked upon in ancient times as "a nation famous for the Word of God;" but if the Bull "Unigenitus" is to be enforced among us—if every person who maintains that "the reading of the Sacred Scripture is for all," is to be forthwith denounced as "impious, blasphemous, and heretical," and "deserving of the indignation of God Almighty, and of the blessed Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul," it needs but little wisdom to foresee that, in this point at least, our land will never again be deserving of its ancient renown.

Our limits warn us that we must conclude: and it is a relief to turn from the angry denunciations we have just quoted, to the sweet and touching words which that holy and ancient Father, St. Augustine, addressed to the Christians of his day—"We are brethren: why do we strive? Our Father died not intestate; he made a testament, and so died. Men do strive about the goods of the dead, till the testament be brought forth; when that is brought, they yield to have it opened and read; the judge doth hearken, the counsellors be silent, the crier biddeth peace, and all the people are attentive, that the words of the dead may be read and heard. He lieth, void of life, and feeling, in his grave, and his words prevail. Christ doth sit in heaven; and is his testament gainsayed? Open it; let us read, we are brethren; why do we strive? Let our minds be pacified; our Father hath not left us without a testament; he that made the testament is living for ever. He doth hear our words, he doth know His own words; let us read: why do we strive?"*

UNITY OF SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE.—The devil being an apostate spirit, revolted and separated from God, doth naturally project and work division. This was his first exploit, and is still his grand design in the world. And as the devil's work is division, Christ's work is union. He came to dissolve the works of the devil by a contrary work.—1 John iii. 8. He came to make all friends; to re-collect and unite all men to God, and man to man. This was his great project; this he died and suffered for, and this he prayed for.—John xvii. The love of our brethren is not another from the love of God; it is but the streaming forth of it, or the reflection of it. God allows, nay, commands and causes that it stream forth, remaining still in him, as in its source and centre; beginning at him and returning to him, as the beams that diffuse themselves from the sun, and the light and heat yet are not divided or cut off from it, but remain in it, while by emanation they issue from it. The love of God makes us one with God, and, dwelling in the heart, enlarges and dilates it, as self-love contracts and straitens it. The bitter root of all enmity in man against God, and amongst men, against one another, is self—man's heart turned from God towards himself. Whence is it that wars, and contests, and mutual disgracings and despisings do so much abound, but that men love themselves, and nothing but themselves, or in relation to themselves, as it pleases, or is advantageous to them? That is the standard and rule. All is carried by interest; thence strifes, and defamings, and bitterness against one another. Nothing short of the Spirit of Christ can undo this selfishness. But let that spirit once dwell in thy heart, and to forgive a wrong, to love even an enemy, will be not only possible, but delightful. The spirit of Christ, which is all sweetness and love, so calms and composes the heart, and fills the soul with lovingness, that it can breathe nothing else. It hates nothing but sin; it pities the sinner, and carries towards the worst that love of good will, desiring their return and salvation. But as for those, in whom appears the image of their Father, their heart cleaves to them as brethren indeed. No natural advantages of birth, beauty, or wit, draw a Christian's love so much as the resemblance of Christ; wherever that is found, it is comely and lovely in the soul that loves him.—Archbishop Leighton.

* Aug. Op., tom. iv., p. 102. Paris, 1681.

PURGATORY.

WE think we may confidently appeal to those readers who have candidly perused the articles on this subject in our former numbers, to testify that we have kept our promise of discussing this momentous subject with a serious regard for the feelings and opinions of others who have been educated in an undoubting belief of the doctrine of the Church of Rome upon it. One class alone can possibly have taken offence at what we have said, even though dissenting from the views we have suggested. We mean the clergy, who not only derive a lucrative traffic from the popular belief, but must needs enjoy thereby a greater authority over that numerous class of persons who are conscious that they do not live so innocently as to be out of danger of purgatorial punishment, and who would, therefore, willingly resort to any means held out to them by their clergy to escape from it. Masses for the dead and indulgences have, no doubt, been of immense importance to the treasury of the Church, whether the laity have derived an equivalent benefit from them or not. That any class of men should take umbrage at a discussion which directly concerns their pecuniary gains, is natural enough; and we are not surprised that priests should endeavour to deter the laity from considering or discussing such a subject, if they give them credit for as much intelligence as we do, and do not feel very sure of successfully maintaining the truth of their doctrines on the calm and full discussion to which we invited and challenged them in our first number. We write, however, for laymen who desire to read and think, and arrive at truth for themselves; and we firmly believe that every attempt to reduce them to slavish credulity previous to examination, will recoil upon those who are weak enough to resort to it.

We shall now proceed to show that the doctrine of Purgatory is neither a truth founded on Scripture or reason, nor even on tradition, or the unanimous testimony of the Fathers of the Church. As we commenced with that branch of our subject in our last number, we shall take the Fathers first. We have already produced, what we think to be a strong argument, that St. Patrick himself was not aware of it, and did not believe in its existence. That such a treatise as that on the Three Habitations should have been for so many centuries attributed to St. Patrick, whether rightly or not, proves, at least, that the views suggested in it could not have been considered heretical or unsound by the early Church of Ireland. We are the less surprised that the early Church were ignorant of this doctrine, from finding that St. Leo the Great, who was himself Pope in St. Patrick's time, and whose voluminous writings have been published in two large quarto volumes, appears to have known nothing of the modern doctrine, that there was any mode of expurgating, after death, what during life had been left unsatisfied, either in the way of guilt or punishment; for in his Epistle to Theodore, Bishop of Friuli, dated 10th June, 452, speaking of the penitents who had not performed all their acts of penance (or repentance), and thereby received the remission of their sins through that indulgence of God (indulgentia Dei), which cannot (he says) be obtained without the prayers of the priests, he goes on thus (chap. 3)—"But if any one of them for whom we pray unto the Lord, being intercepted by any obstacle, shall fall from the gift of the present indulgence (before spoken of), and, before he arrives at the appointed remedies, ends his temporal life, that which remaining in the body he hath not received, when he is divested of his body, he cannot obtain."* What is this but to say, that though the Lord had delivered to the Church the power of giving ecclesiastical absolution to persons who were penitent, and desirous of being cleansed from their sins (*salubri satisfactione purgatos*), that power was confined to the present life, and could not be, after death, granted even to the supplication of the priests?

Surely it is not possible to believe that St. Leo would have thus written, if he had known that there was a place where penitents and believers, who had not performed all their penances in this life, could be purged or cleansed, either by their own sufferings, or by the supplications of the clergy or of their surviving friends? St. Leo obviously knew nothing of any such doctrine as that of satisfying in purgatory what had not been paid or completed in this life; and, therefore, we conclude, that no such doctrine as purgatory was handed down by tradition from the time of the Apostles, as otherwise so great a man as St. Leo the Great could not have passed it over without distinctly noticing it. Should we have overlooked any passage in St. Leo's works which may tend to throw light upon the subject, we shall feel obliged to any among the learned who will be good enough to furnish us with a reference to it.

St. Leo and St. Patrick, however, do not by any means

stand alone in the views we have expressed; for it is remarkable that several of the ancient Fathers utterly deny that the soul is capable of being purged in another world. St. Gregory Nazianzen, who died A. D. 389, was the most profound scholar of his age, and won from all his contemporaries the prize of eloquence, excelling them (to use the language of Dupin, himself a learned Roman Catholic divine), "in the purity of his words, the nobleness of his expressions, the ornaments of his discourse, the variety of his figures, the justness of his comparisons, the beauty of his reasonings, and the sublimity of his thoughts." This eminent Father of the Church was successively Bishop of Sasimi, Nazianzus, and Constantinople; and living still nearer to the times of the Apostles, could not have been ignorant of such a doctrine as that of purgatory, had any such thing been known in the Church. Most, if not all, of his works are extant (and have undergone a variety of editions), consisting of about fifty orations or sermons, besides letters and poems; and yet, so far from any reference to such a doctrine being found in his works, he, in fact, as directly and formally denies that there is any purgatory in the next life, as any writer could do in an age when the doctrine subsequently introduced was really unknown. After speaking of the scourges by which God purifies man in this life, he adds, in his xvi. Orat.—"It is better to be chastised and purged now (in life) than to be delivered to that torture (after death), since then shall be the time of punishment, NOT OF EXPURGATION,"* expressly contrasting the time of purgation in this life with the time, not of purgation, but of punishment, in the next. How could St. Gregory have thus written, if he knew the doctrine of the Church was, that the departed souls, even of the redeemed, must be purified in purgatory before reaching heaven?

St. Chrysostom, who died A.D. 407, was of the same opinion, for he says, in his Homily de Penitentia—"If the soul be purged here that fire shall not hurt it when it departs hence; but the soul that goes hence in sin, that fire shall receive"—meaning not the fire of purgatory, which he never names, but that of hell (*Gehennae*), which he had named immediately before.†

To these we might add, but for fear of becoming tedious, St. Cyril of Alexandria, tom. iv., book 12, p. 1069: Paris, 1638. St. Cyprian De Mortalitate, sec. ii., p. 157: Oxford, 1682. St. Hilary on the 120th Psalm, p. 978: Paris, 1652; and several others.

Such was the doctrine of those early ages, when, if tradition from the Apostles ever taught Divine truths distinct from those contained in the Holy Scriptures, they could not have been unknown to the Pope and eminent Fathers we have referred to. Their doctrine was simply that which the Scriptures still teach—viz., the soul that is clear of sin by God's pardon and forgiveness, through the merits of Christ's atoning sacrifice, no fire can hurt; the soul that is not so forgiven, no fire can cleanse. Christ, in fact, does not do his work of atonement by halves—remitting the guilt, and yet leaving the punishment! Where the guilt is removed, the punishment is so likewise, temporal as well as eternal. Tertullian, Chrysostom, Augustine, all say this; and even St. Bernard, in speaking of the completeness of the Divine pardon, says—"Some there are who forgive injury, so as not to revenge it, but still they upbraid; others there are who are silent, though somewhat remains deeply rooted in their minds, and they retain inward rancour. In neither case is there a full pardon. Far from these is the benignant nature of the Godhead—HE ACTS WITH LIBERALITY—HE FORGIVES ENTIRELY."‡

In corroboration of these views we would observe, that we can find no mention of purgation after death in any of the ancient creeds, or councils, or catechetical discourses, in which the other articles of faith are set down and explained. The fifth general council, which, A.D. 553, condemned Origen for his errors concerning those pains after death which he conceived restored even the damned, never mentioned any other purgatory in opposition to that which he had heretically invented, nor did any of the Fathers who disputed with Origen mention any of the purgatory pains which the orthodox faith taught, to distinguish them from those which he erroneously had invented, as they surely could not have failed to do, if such had been then firmly believed by the Church. The fact is, that at a later period Pope Gregory—who died A.D. 604—though he gave considerable countenance to this doctrine, spoke of it with some doubt, not as a point even then firmly resolved by the Church, though no doubt it had, within the preceding two centuries, gained some little credit among the clergy of the west, especially among the monastic orders; and was soon after, under the sanction of Pope Gregory, eagerly seized on by the Benedictine monks, and found so

* Sancti Leonis Magni Opera, tom. i., page 695. Lutet. Paris, 1675.

Epistola 82 ad Theodorum Forojuliensem Episcopum (A.D. 452, 10 Junii.)

Cap. iii. "Si autem aliquis eorum, pro quibus Domino supplicamus quocumque intercepto obstaculo à munere indulgentie presentis, exciderit (alias excesserit) marq; et priusquam ad constituta remedia perveniat temporalem vitam humana conditione finiret, quod manens in corpore non recepit, consequi crucis carne non poterit."

* Orat. xvi. tom. i., pp. 304, 305.

† Chrysostomi de Penitentia, Homil. vi., Oper. Omo., tom. ii., p. 320. Paris, 1718. Benedictine Edit. (We give the Latin translation.)

‡ Hic igne examinamus, verbo scilicet doctrine, quo minus idipsum cogatur *Gehennae* igne. Nam purgatum animam hinc abeuntem, ille non laedit ignis; eam autem que cum peccatis hinc abierit ille ignis excipiet. Unius culmoque enim opus quod, inquit, sit, ignis probabit.—1 Cor. iii. 13."

§ Bernard Sermo de Fragmentis, col. 300, Oper. ed Paris, 1586.